Please amend Claims 1-29 and 31-33 as follows.

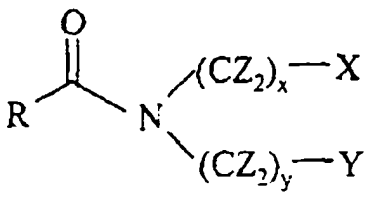
1. (Amended) An agent for transferring nucleic acids, comprising a hydrophobic spacer chemically linked, firstly, to a polycation and, secondly, to at least one hydrophilic substituent.

2. (Amended) The agent of Clam 1, wherein said hydrophobic spacer comprises 2 to 3 hydrocarbon-based linear fatty chains comprising between 10 and 20 carbon atoms per chain, wherein said chains need not be of equal length, or a hydrocarbon-based linear fatty chain comprising between 20 and 50 carbon atoms.

3. (Amended) The agent of Claim 1, wherein said at least one hydrophilic substituent is selected from the group consisting of a hyroxyl substituent, an amino substituent, a polyol, a sugar, and a hydrophilic peptide.

4. (Amended) The agent of Claim 3, wherein said at least one hydrophilic substituent comprises a sugar.

5. (Amended) The agent of Claim 1, of general formula (I):



(I)

for which:

- R represents a polycation,

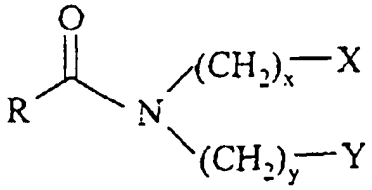
- Z represents a hydrogen atom or a fluorine atom, the various Zs being independent of each other, and

- either x and y, independently of each other, represent integers between 10 and 22 inclusive, and X and Y, independently of each other, represent a hydrogen atom, an -OAlk group in which Alk represents a straight or branched alkyl containing 1 to 4 carbon atoms, a hydroxyl group, an amino group, a polyol, a sugar, a hydrophilic or non-hydrophilic peptide, or an oligonucleotide, it being understood that at least one of the X and Y substituents represents a hydrophilic group chosen from hydroxyl groups, amino groups, polyols, sugars or hydrophilic peptides,

- or x is equal to 0 or 1, y is an integer between 20 and 50, X is either a hydrogen atom or an -OAlk group in which Alk represents a straight or branched alkyl containing 1 to 4 carbon atoms, and Y is a hydrophilic group comprising a hydroxyl group, an amino group, a polyol, or a hydrophilic peptide,

where appropriate in the isomeric forms thereof, and also the mixtures thereof or the salts thereof, when they exist.

6. (Amended) The agent of Claim 1 of general formula (III):



(III)

for which:

- R represents a polycation, and

- either x and y, independently of each other, represent integers between 10 and 22 inclusive, and X and Y, independently of each other, represent a hydrogen atom or a sugar, it being understood that at least one of the X and Y substituents represents a sugar,

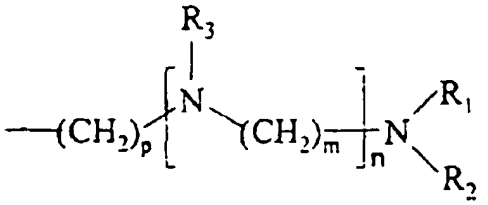
- or x is equal to 0 or 1, y is an integer between 20 and 50, X is a hydrogen atom and Y is a sugar,

where appropriate in the isomeric forms thereof, and also the mixtures thereof or the salts thereof, when they exist.

7. (Amended) The agent of Claim 6, wherein x and y, independently of each other, represent integers between 10 and 22 inclusive, and one of X and Y represents a hydrogen atom and the other a sugar.

8. (Amended) The agent of Claim 1, wherein said polycation is a linear or branched polyamine, each amino group being separated by one or more methylene groups.

9. (Amened) The agent of Claim 8, wherein said polycation has the general formula (II):



(II)

in which:

- R_1, R_2 and R_3 represent, independently of each other, a hydrogen atom or a $(CH_2)_qNR'R"$ group with q an integer possibly ranging from 1 to 6, this being independent among the various R_1, R_2 and R_3 groups, it being understood that at least one of R_1, R_2 and R_3 is other than a hydrogen atom,
- R' and R" represent, independently of each other, a hydrogen atom or a $(CH_2)_qNH_2$ group with q defined as above,
- m represents an integer between 1 and 6, and
- n and p represent, independently of each other, integers between 0 and 6, with, when n is greater than or equal to 2, m being able to have different values and R_3 different meanings within the general formula (II) and, when n is equal to 0, at least one of the R_1 and R_2 substituents is other than a hydrogen atom.

10. (Amended) The agent of Claim 1, wherein said polycation is selected from the group consisting of: spermine, spermidine, cadaverine, putrescine, hexamethylenetetramine (hexamine), methacrylamidopropyltrimethylammonium chloride (AMBTAC), 3-acrylamido-3-methylbutyltrimethylammonium chloride (AMBTAC), polyvinylamine, polyethyleneimine, and ionene.

11. (Amended) The agent of Claim 3, wherein said sugar comprises a monosaccharide, an oligosaccharide, or a polysaccharide.

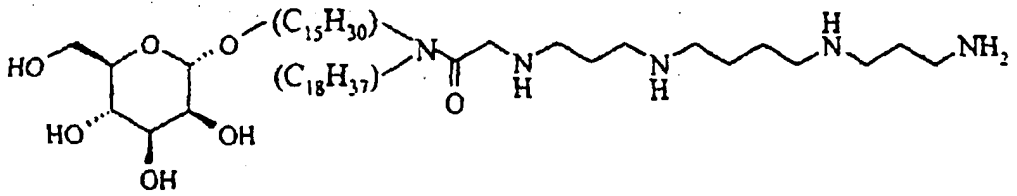
12. (Amended) The agent of Claim 11, wherein said sugar comprises glucose,

mannose, rhamnose, galactose, fructose, maltose, lactose, saccharose, sucrose, fucose, cellobiose, allose, laminarabiose, gentiobiose, sophorose, melibiose, dextran, α-amylose, amylopectin, fructan, mannan, xylan, or arabinan.

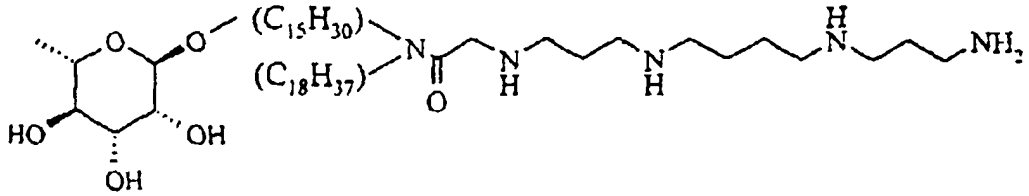
13. (Amended) The agent of Claim 5, wherein said oligonucleotide is any chain containing one or more nucleotides, deoxynucleotides, ribonucleotides and/or deoxyribonucleotides.

14. (Amended) The agent of Claim 5, wherein said peptide is any chain containing one or more amino acids linked to each other via attachments of a peptide nature, optionally substituted with one or more aliphatic groups which may be saturated or unsaturated, and linear, branched or cyclic.

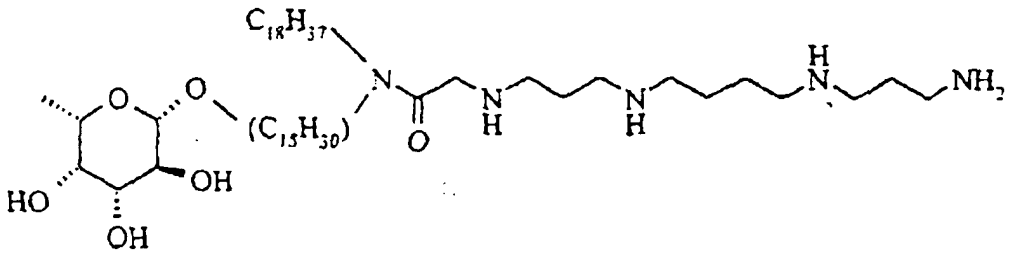
15. (Amended) The agent of Claim 1, having a formula:



16. (Amended) The agent of Claim 1, having a formula:



17. (Amended) The agent of Claim 1, having a formula:



18. (Amended) A composition comprising agent of Claim 1, and a nucleic acid.

19. (Amended) The composition of Claim 18, wherein the nucleic acid is a deoxyribonucleic acid or a ribonucleic acid.

20. (Amended) The composition of Claim 18, wherein said nucleic acid comprises one or more genes of therapeutic interest under the control of regulatory sequences.

21. (Amended) The composition of Claim 18, wherein said nucleic acid is an antisense sequence or gene.

22. (Amended) The composition of Claim 18, further comprising an adjuvant.

23. (Amended) The composition of Claim 22, wherein the adjuvant is a neutral lipid.

24. (Amended) The composition of Claim 23, wherein said neutral lipid comprises two fatty chains.

25. (Amended) The composition of Claim 23, wherein said neutral lipid is a natural or synthetic lipid, which is zwitterionic or lacks an ionic charge under physiological conditions.

26. The composition of Claim 22, wherein said adjuvant is a compound involved in the condensation of the nucleic acid.

27. (Amended) The composition of Claim 26, wherein said adjuvant is derived, as a whole or in part, from a protamine, from a histone or from a nucleolin, and/or from a derivative thereof, or consists, as a whole or in part, of peptide units (KTPKKAKKP) (SEQ ID NO:1) and/or (ATPAKKAA) (SEQ ID NO:2), the number of units possibly ranging between 2 and 10, and possibly being repeated continuously or discontinuously.

E1 cont'd

28. (Amended) The composition of Claim 18, further comprising a vehicle which is pharmaceutically acceptable for an injectable formulation.

29.(Amended) The composition of Claim 18, further comprising a vehicle which is pharmaceutically acceptable for application to the skin and/or mucous membranes.

E2

31. (Amended) Method for treating a human or animal body, comprising the following steps:

(1) contacting a nucleic acid with a transfer agent as defined in Claim 1 to form a

complex, and

(2) contacting cells of the human or animal body with the complex formed in (1).

32. (Amended) Method for transferring nucleic acids into cells, comprising the following steps:

(1) contacting a nucleic acid with a transfer agent of Claim 1 to form a complex, and

(2) contacting the cells with the complex formed in (1).

E2 cont'd

33. (Amended) Method of Claim 32 for transferring nucleic acids into cells, wherein said transfer agent and/or said nucleic acid are mixed beforehand with an adjuvant.

Please add the following new Claims:

--34. The composition of Claim 25, wherein said neutral lipid is selected from the group consisting of:

E3

dioleoylphosphatidylethanolamine (DOPE), oleylpalmitoylphosphatidylethanolamine (POPE), di-stearoyl, -palmitoyl, -myristoylphosphatidylethanolamine, a derivative of myristoylphosphatidylethanolamine that is N-methylated 1 to 3 times, phosphatidylglycerol, diacylglycerol, glycosyldiacylglycerol, cerebroside, sphingolipid, and asialoganglioside.

35. The composition of Claim 34, wherein cerebroside comprises galactocerebroside, sphingolipid comprises sphingomyelin, and asialoganglioside